

Leerdammer

A Hive by Landru

Barred Citizens

Long march of the Navajo.

The new age of Tolerance?

I grew up in a part of Yorkshire where they had just taken down the signs for 'no dogs blacks or Irish' and where 'Wo.s go home!' was graffitied across nearly every railway arch in the county.

When Malcolm X appeared on the news I wondered what he had done. What made him such a pariah?

Hippies and drop-outs were frowned upon. The smoking of dope was outlawed. You had to wear a tie to get into a night-club.

If a woman drunk alone in a bar she was obviously just 'looking for business.'

When I flew to Ireland with my dad I didn't need a passport to cross over the border even though he was a member of Sinn Fein.

Protestants had to cross to the other side of the street to get past our school only to have a brick or some personal insults thrown at them.

We were stopped from talking to anyone who wasn't the same colour as us. When my mother left my dad because of his brutality and his drinking we became pariahs ourselves; we became homeless until we were taken in by the Salvation Army.

My dad was disqualified from driving or from loitering on the road outside.

At sixteen my friends and I were expelled from the Mucky Duck for drinking underage.

Travellers weren't even allowed through the front entrance because they were 'all thieves and stole your young 'uns.'

Some pubs had a sign which said 'No hikers!' So anyone wearing boots was soon shown the door.

A mate of mine was barred for dropping his trousers as he walked up the steps.

A lad I went to school with who had been the Captain of our football team appeared in the local paper for holding up a cinema. I think he was the look-out man.

As a punishment he received twelve years in custody.

I had respect for the conventions of society and looked down my nose at anyone who had any kind of criminal record.

I wanted to be a soccer player myself but became an Instructor in Occupational therapy. I organized my own groups in Art and

Education. I worked with disabled people who were often not accepted and with the mentally ill who were never wanted. My line-manager approached me one day about an elderly gentleman who had offered to do some voluntary work in his spare time;

“Make sure you get him checked out. We don't want any old perverts working alongside us!”

Before I came out of prison I was excluded from North and South Wales and most of Oxfordshire, where most of my best friends still resided.

I was prevented from going to my church or attending my writer's circle by the police.

I had been convicted of contacting my ex partner on the phone on my birthday.

Non threatening and non malicious.

I had been a decent and law-abiding member of society for most of my life but now I too was a 'Barred-Citizen.'

In the words of 'Crazy Horse:' A man cannot own the ground on which he walks.

Incarceration Works

Prison has become a revolving door with the population rising year by year and the cost growing out of all proportion to the improvement of society.

Even recent attempts by the Minister for Justice to supervise more people in the community has met with stiff opposition. Although the cost of imprisoning increasing numbers of people cannot be sustained there are many people in society who think that prison is the only answer and that the only reasonable way of punishing anyone who steps out of line is to lock them firmly behind bars whatever the cost. In a very competitive and pressurized world an influx of new laws has increased the number of law-breakers. Prison recalls are booming: shouting in the street, an argument with your partner, late for an appointment, we don't like your attitude, you wore shorts in our interview – back inside!

Dragged along in handcuffs by a hovering mob of flatfoots. Many offences would have been viewed as trivial in the past. Imagine trying to explain to a soldier in the trenches that you could get two years for sending a text message or that you could have your life completely ruined by telling someone you still cared about them. The Prime Minister said recently that the claims brought by prisoners due to the blunders made by prison staff amounted to many millions of pounds. Cases of salmonella and medical negligence abound. A lot of prisoners are detainees or foreign nationals. Prison has become a dumping ground for every social delinquent, misfit and reprobate. Members of society who are most enthusiastic about incarceration include the police and the Probation service. We have known for years that the police are willing to sell information to the highest bidder but don't tell anyone I told you...

One sided and distorted gossip is spread across the daily news and internet.

Long-winded and expensive reports written by 'experts' follow offenders wherever they go no matter how biased, false or inaccurate. Some commentators believe that a lot of people don't really need to be cooped up in prison and that they are not really doing anything worthwhile or productive there. They think that prison actually makes people worse and that due to the intolerant and prejudiced attitude of people who are too quick to judge others they leave prison with a mountain to climb and the increased likelihood of further offending. Society has created an underclass-of-citizens incapable of finding

work or any kind of happy fulfilling existence.

Many members of society couldn't care less how people decline through the process or how men go steadily downhill with every dismal step leading back to the jail house.

Time to reflect on one's actions is seriously diminished by the level of care, the disturbing nature of prison life, and the catastrophic turmoil besieging one's mind.

How can a place which is so full of violence, drug abuse and harm be a centre for nurturing someone back into normality?

Politeness and tolerance are in very short supply. Honesty and reality a thing of the past.

A small number of individuals are completely incapable of improving. There are a group of prisoners so dangerous and anti-social that prison is the only answer. These people can never be rehabilitated or adjusted back. Their life is so damaged and disrupted that having them out in society would only lessen the safety of others and would capitulate to a deterioration of standards for us all.

There are plans to make prison even tougher and to keep people there for longer if their behaviour justifies it. This doesn't take into account the attitude of prison staff who are always ready to give a prisoner a bad report or to pigeon-hole them into obscurity. How would an ordinary member of society feel if they were given a behaviour warning for hanging their coat up at the end of their bed, for wearing a pair of boots out in the yard, or for asking a sensible question when you are being bullied by a loud-mouthed and aggressive tyrant?

Power produces resistance to power.

You obtain 'enhanced status' if you are willing to jump through hoops. Meaningless tasks such as 'penny-washing' are handed out like gold dust.

Inmates are deliberately matched with someone who is their violent opposite.

I was once attacked in the middle of the night by a prisoner who was suffering from Schizophrenia. It was a terrifying experience. I reported it to one of the Officers the next day.

"So how do you know he's suffering from schizophrenia. Are you a fucking expert?"

Well actually I worked with people just like him in the health service...

"Not really," I said. "He told me so himself."

Many Officers come from a military background.

There's a personal officer scheme which was being touted around

recently. It was an attempt by the Establishment to turn prison officers into social-workers...

A man had hit me from behind with a piece of pottery because he said I owed him a mars bar. I consulted my personal officer...

“Who's your personal officer?” she asked me, chewing her gum and examining her nail-varnish.

“You are, and you have been for the last six months,” I said.

Sharing with another male in such a small claustrophobic space can produce a lot of friction. There is often no privacy. It can be degrading and miserable, but no-where near as bad as the journey to court in handcuffs on the prison bus, which must be the most depressing place on earth. Your file lies open on the desk ready for the escorts to read all about your personal background and charges. A smirk on their face.

I've met with every kind of villain you can think of. Men who could read and men who couldn't. Men who had raped their daughters and priests who insisted they had done nothing wrong.

Each individual left prison even worse than when they entered. Not a single person was improved by the experience and many went out alone with the same demons and obsessions as before.

Not a single programme of treatment halted their beliefs or radically changed their thinking. Many risk-levels actually increased.

I've seen men jump head first from the balcony in an effort to end it all. Men suffer complete breakdowns when their loving and faithful wife wrote in to say they were seeing a police officer. Young men who could have been developing deep and meaningful relationships slit their arms open in desperation.

Yes, of course it works to keep people locked up for long periods of their life. It certainly helps the politicians when there's an election looming.

PEST CONTROLLER

In response to your advert for PEST CONTROLLER, I would like to offer my services free-of-charge.

It is about time someone stepped in to prevent this unparalleled intrusion into our private lives.

Provide me with the right equipment and you will never hear from them again.

Phone of the new life-savers

"Hello Samaritans

Is anybody there...?"

A moment's silence.

Could it be yet another sex-caller?

I glanced at my colleague and yawned.

Today's Day-leader turned from her file and took a sip of her wine.

"How are you feeling this morning?" I asked.

I could hear heavy breathing.

"I've just lost my wife," a voice answered. I could hear sobbing.

"The house has burnt down, and I was fired from my job."

"Our only daughter was killed yesterday crossing the road."

He gave his name as 'Chad'.

"Well, things could be a lot worse," I said.

"I've just been diagnosed with lung cancer," he whispered.

"Have you ever thought about taking your own life?" I said.

"Seriously."

"It could be the best thing for you. I hear they have run out of argon gas for the present but there is a perfectly good multi-storey car park near the town centre."

Thunderskyer

Turn,
sweet crystal,
on your viewless string,
enchanted mobile of the heaven's frosted pale,
Bringer of a thousand oceans array your driven silk,
before the Reaper spreads his golden wings...
Informal country where the regal seagulls cry,
shipwreck the seconds till the frowning welkin flies,
spread wide your steeped fingertip towards the humming of the night,
and flutter in your breathless mousewood cage.
Shift your solemn turnstile from the pollen of the storm,
and turn your wanton glance upon the streaking of the light,
impel their drumming hooves across the marathon of space,
and know they are the emissaries of your fate.
Turn and turn again my love until the graze of iron glove,
entreats the soft-hued Giver donning fell of raven hair,
lay your scarlet ribbons at the feet of darker days,
and know they are the amber of your soul.
Release the Rider from the Looker at the bridge,
and warrant that the Keeper's forge is primed,
let the goat drawn chariot girdle flame upon the crown,
and blitzkrieg while the fractured heaven's burst.
Uprooted figurehead where forgotten callers gaze,
whose tusky fingernails trail black among the leaves,
lift your fallen wand towards the blaze of other worlds,
and know they are the hammer of thy doom.

Plain of reeds

In realm of nature's crinal dance,
beneath Eurus of tide romance,
as wave by wave the reeds advance,
my hands now smooth the flowing fields.
The grey sky meets with ruptured black,
by knee deep colours straw and rust,
in far distance the white edged dusk,
shines light upon my stripling's cusp.
Their reed song chants the cadent hymn,
uncanny notes first flute, then bass,
spasmodic multitudes of sound,
I wash you in my warden's lynn.
A playing on my pipe of reeds,
the kernelled dew of redolence,
conjures up the turgent dance,
about my cloak of innocence.

Catching snowflakes

Collapsing world,
I grant this palm,
its special favour,
before the rapturous Sun...
in dazzled ardour from the skies,
scorches this fingertip.
Unmelted spring from northern lands,
in halting fevers drifted,
these momentary flakes,
like fleeting swallows from my arms,
appear these precious things.
Sheared flocks of night found gems,
on heaven's palace marble,
no despairing veil,
in speechless pallor from the winds,
before your very eyes.
Uplifted gloom in fields of grey,
the blinded cascades faded,
life refuting rose,
in cushioned waltzes from the sea,
darkens my little ones.

Five lost fingers and six left thumbs

Professor: He's mad you know!

Percival: Who is?

Professor: Reich. Have you heard about his new machine: the all-gasmatron?

Percival: It's people like him who give us all a bad name. Einstein sat in his crazy box. Orgiastic potency. A deficiency of orgone. Units of cosmic energy. No wonder Freud had him chucked out. He'll be chasing lights in the sky next Professor. Mother killed herself after having to admit her adultery. There was a young man set on the straight and narrow. A real character-smasher even if I do say so.

Professor: I think it was the food and drinks agency which finally caught up with him. Found the origins of life in a soup can...

Percival: Has this anything to do with first contact. Applewhite's descent of supernatural beings from heaven.?

Professor: Are you trying to be funny?

Percival: We are meant to be entering a New Age aren't we Professor...

Professor: It was a night just like this when Miss Brahms disappeared. We searched all over the glass island. People began to say she had just got cold feet.

Percival: Every victory on the part of knowledge is the result of hardness towards oneself....I was one day walking beside the lake of Silva Plana. I stopped beside a mighty pyramidical block of stone, which reared itself up from the far surlei. Then this idea came to me.

Professor: The blatantly phallogocentric bias of this account! Jouissance. That's what its all about. I'm not religious, but neither am I a man of science. I nothing more than a conquistador by temperament, an intemperate adventurer. All morality is partisan. Any legal system will favour certain behaviour

against others. The doctrine of free will is the invention of the ruling classes. Who would we wish to serve if not ourselves...

The surest remedy for the male disease of self-contempt is surely the love of a sensible woman.

Make the best of what you are. This life is the only one you have. You will live it time without number with nothing new in it. All the events of your life however big and small will return to you and everything in the same series and sequence.

All things are chained and entwined together. Every pain and every joy.

We will always return to our beginnings.

A wilderness of spasms and convulsions.

Percival: There are more things in heaven and earth Horatio...

The Man who never was

There was a man who never was,
his pate was bald his legs were short,
I never knew his hearty smile,
His head was large I'm sure of that.
He never came inside our house,
He never sat beside our cat,
or on the hill,
to stoop and chat,
The man who never was.

I never knew,
the Sun was strong,
I never knew his face for long,
He stood and smiled he leant a while,
the man who never was.

My mother said he wasn't free,
he stood and stroked my head at three,
but that was in the days gone by,
the penny dropped with me.

The Soul of Qays

To share,
these rays of unblemished light with you,
my loving heart would toil across an open desert.

To give,
all the blessings of the Land,
these loving eyes would run in fields of open rivers.
Enta nooreni enta habibti wa omri wa hayati...
for you I disturb the Earth and Moon,
trade oceans for the sands,
(sweet lonely nightshade...)
and all the beauties of your house,
your skin, your purse, woven in a leafy fabric and floating.
(Erjae lelbait erjae ly, habib wa sadikati, samehini ala dayae,
wa emani...).

Bare your fluttering lashes.
like flowing water to your side Basema,
clear,
with far-off kisses.

White God Rising

The stars were lured, the sky in black,
our gentle lord in charnell house,
a sea of white invades the land,
from cast-off roots of tooth and nail.

How lies the land in barren bloom,
on flowers blood the seed were blown,
my flesh devoured, my eyes depart,
from wounds of earth I come to grief.

A bag of bones against the Moon,
I stumbled north, then sank again,
while reaching for a higher star,
new gods will rise, while old rules fade.

With convict's light I journey south,
for southern winds for southern winds,
my love my love, by slow degrees,
the shadow lost upon my knees.

I sow fresh corn from white God's hands,
in cast-off robes, of riot splashed,
from out my side the flowers bloom,
the basket which contained my heart.